PennERA Upgrade
System Upgrade Complete

The PennERA (Electronic Research Administration) team is pleased to announce that on April 27, 2005, a system-wide upgrade was completed. The upgrade brings an enhanced system with a new look and feel for applications, new features, and improved navigation. As part of the upgrade, additional security was added to the system, and the applications are now accessed through SSL (Secure Socket Layer), which changes the access URL from “http” to “https.” The new URL to access the PennERA application is https://www.pennera.upenn.edu.

End-user support

Along with the system upgrade, the PennERA team has developed an end-user support system to assist users:

- Help Line—Users dial 6-2900 (on campus) or 215-746-2900 (off campus); hours are 9AM-5PM, Monday-Friday. This single help-desk number can be used for all operational and technical questions.
- E-mail—Questions can be e-mailed to pennerahelp@pobox.upenn.edu.
- Web—A web form is available from the PennERA Help page at http://project.pennera.upenn.edu/help.asp. Users enter information that will automatically be directed to subject matter and technical experts in the same manner as the Help Line.
- Online Reference Materials—Reference materials are available on the web at https://rosetta.upenn.edu/cgi-bin/websec/websec_authform?app=RMDocs 4. (PennKey and PennKey password required to access the documents.)

New Advisories page

A new Advisories web page is also being developed at http://project.pennera.upenn.edu/advisories 2. On this page, you will be able to find late-breaking news, usage tips, what to do if you encounter...
certain error messages, and other information for getting the most out of PennERA.

**Near-term initiatives underway:**

Now that the system upgrade is complete and an end-user support structure is in place, the PennERA team is working on the following near-term initiatives:

- **Faculty/Reviewer Web Interface**—Assessment of the development of a web-based interface for faculty and reviewers to potentially submit/review/track Animal Protocol and Conflict of Interest information.

- **Recommendation for Research Portal**—A recommendation, in alignment with the overall Penn Portal Strategy, for a web portal to serve as one central location for information about research at Penn. The PennERA team has met with several research offices and received feedback, and is currently finalizing the design for the Research tab on the U@Penn web site.

- **SOMERA Interface**—Interface between PennERA and SOMERA (School of Medicine ERA). Data from SOMERA will be fed to PennERA to create new proposal records in PennERA.

**What’s next?**

After the near-term initiatives are completed, the PennERA team will move forward with the planning for the next phase of the project. The team will work on delivering enhanced access to information and tools by making portions of the currently installed base available to the University research community. The team will consider several factors in its planning, including the assessment of peer-universities’ approaches to electronic research as well as Federal demands, initiatives, and requirements. Stay tuned for additional activities in Penn’s full life-cycle system for research project development, support, and management.

**More information about PennERA**

Additional updates about PennERA will be provided throughout the project. For the most current information, please visit the PennERA web site at [https://www.pennera.upenn.edu/](https://www.pennera.upenn.edu/) and click on the “PennERA Project” tab at the top of the page. If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, please send an e-mail to pennera@pobox.upenn.edu.

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--Andrew B. Rudczynski, Ph. D., Executive Director of Research Services and Associate Vice President of Finance

--Joseph R. Sherwin, Ph.D., Director of the Office of Regulatory Affairs
NIH News
Implementation of the National Institutes of Health Public Access Policy.


Summary of the Policy:
The Policy becomes effective May 2, 2005. The Policy requests and strongly encourages all NIH-funded investigators to make their peer-reviewed author’s final manuscripts available to other researchers and the public at the NIH National Library of Medicine’s PubMed Central (PMC) [see http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov] immediately after the final date of journal publication. At the time of submission, authors are given the option to release their manuscripts at a later time, up to 12 months after the official date of final publication. NIH expects that only in limited cases will authors deem it necessary to select the longest delay period.

The Policy applies to all research grant and career development award mechanisms, cooperative agreements, contracts, Institutional and Individual Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Awards, as well as NIH intramural research studies. The Policy applies to peer-reviewed, original research publications that have been supported in whole or in part with direct costs1 from NIH, but it does not apply to book chapters, editorials, reviews, or conference proceedings. NIH is requesting that authors submit publications resulting from 1) currently-funded NIH research projects or 2) previously-supported NIH research projects where manuscripts were accepted for publication on or after May 2, 2005. Publications resulting from non-NIH-supported research projects should not be submitted. We welcome comments and suggestions about the submission process. Please contact us at PublicAccess@nih.gov.

The NIH Manuscript Submission System
The password-protected, Web-based, NIH Manuscript Submission (NIHMS) system (http://www.nihms.nih.gov) has been developed to facilitate the submission process. This system allows easy identification of NIH grant numbers (past and present) and NIH intramural project numbers by associating them with the corresponding extramural or intramural Principal Investigator (PI) of the research study. Currently, manuscript files from NIH Intramural PIs can be submitted to the NIHMS system by the PI or designated NIH staff. Manuscript files from extramural PIs may be submitted by the PI only. Beginning July 6, 2005, manuscript files may be submitted to the NIHMS system by either the extramural PI or a third party on the PI’s behalf (e.g., administrative personnel, graduate students, librarians, publishers, etc.).

In all cases, approval of the submitted materials and the determination of the public release date require the PI’s review and authorization. Currently, the system is designed for individual submissions, but procedures for batch processing of multiple submissions are being explored and may be developed in the future. No further formatting of the manuscript is necessary beyond that required by the accepting journals. Special arrangements will be available for unusual cases. Please see the NIH Public Access Web site (http://www.nih.gov/about/publicaccess/) for more information about the Policy.

How to Submit the Manuscript:
• Login to the NIHMS (http://www.nihms.nih.gov).
• Select the appropriate login option (Note: the same login should be used for all subsequent visits to the NIHMS system):
  * NIH extramural investigators select “eRA Commons” (see “What is the NIH eRA Commons?” below).
  * NIH intramural employees select “NIH.”
• Provide basic information, including the journal title, PI, contact information, and associated NIH award number(s).
• Upload the complete text of your manuscript(s). The NIHMS supports a wide variety of file types (MS Word, Word Perfect, PDF, PowerPoint, Excel, etc.).
• Upload any corresponding, supplemental image files that contain figures, tables, or supplementary information along with the manuscript. Just as required by publishing journals, submit high-resolution images to ensure that they can be viewed properly in PMC. The supplemental material that has been submitted to the accepting journal in support of the manuscript will be accepted. The NIHMS will generate a receipt of the uploaded files in PDF format. The PDF receipt summarizes the information entered into the system and merges the manuscript’s files into one viewable document.
• Confirm that the manuscript and any additional supporting documents have been successfully received by NIHMS, and verify the document.
• Review and approve the terms and conditions of a submission agreement and specify the timing of posting of the final manuscript for public accessibility through PMC (this must be completed by the PI). Authors and/or their institutions should ensure that their final manuscript submissions to PMC are consistent with any other agreements, including copyright assignments that they may have, or enter into, with publishers or other third parties. Upon approval of the submission by the PI, the manuscript will be converted into XML - the standardized digital format used by PMC.
• Review the XML manuscript as it will appear in PMC once the conversion has taken place (PIs will be notified by e-mail when the document is ready for review) and correct any errors, if necessary. After PI approval, the article will be publicly accessible through PMC after the time-delay specified by the PI.

Need Help?
Do you have questions about the submission process? Refer to the NIHMS FAQ. The NIHMS system also maintains a help desk to assist users with manuscript submissions and answers to any questions related to the submission process. Contact (http://web.nihms.nih.gov/db/sub/cgi?page=email&from=home) the help desk with your queries.

What is the NIH eRA Commons?
The NIH eRA Commons is a system developed to facilitate the discrete exchange of essential information between NIH and applicant organizations. The “Commons” is a Web interface, available at https://commons.era.nih.gov/commons/, where NIH and the grantee community are able to conduct their extramural research administration business electronically. For example, this system allows PIs and institutional officials to have various degrees of online access to the status of their grant applications and details associated with their grant awards.

An NIH eRA Commons account is required for PIs to enter into the NIHMS system and submit final manuscripts. Submitting authors do not need to be a currently-funded NIH investigator in order to create quickly a Commons account number. If you have questions, problems, or comments regarding the NIH eRA Commons system, please contact the NIH eRA Commons Help Desk at commons@od.nih.gov (Phone: 866-504-9552).
eSNAP
NOW AVAILABLE FOR ELIGIBLE NON-COMPETING CONTINUATION APPLICATIONS

The NIH eRA Commons has a component which allows extramural grantee institutions to submit electronic versions of type 5 (non-competitive) progress reports for those grants which are subject to streamlined non-competing Award Process (SNAP) via a web interface. A significant benefit to using the electronic submission is that the current paper process requires submission of the progress report 60 days prior to the budget start date, while the electronic version is due 45 days prior to the budget start date, thus providing an extra 15 days to the PI to complete and submit the type 5 application. Accordingly, progress reports noted as being due on June 1st will be due, if sent electronically, on June 15th. Also, no paper copies of the progress report will be required by Research Services, although a paper copy of the signed Proposal Transmittal and Approval Form is required prior to submission.

This functionality is now available to the Penn Community. In the past two months, we have selected a small number of eligible applications and asked the principal investigators to participate in a pilot program to submit their applications electronically. This pilot has been successful with relatively few problems identified.

We are now opening up this pilot to all SNAP eligible applications, but are asking that participants identify themselves beforehand so that we can provide support as needed.

If you are willing to participate in this pilot, please contact Pam Caudill at caudill@pobox.upenn.edu and further instructions will be sent to you. In your reply, please indicate if you have a NIH commons account.

Frequently Asked Questions

Has there been a change to how interest is handled when it is earned on 5 funds?

A change was recently implemented which impact the process for federal funds only. According to OMB Circular A-110, grantees are required to remit any interest earned on federal funds back to the federal government on an annual basis. All 5 funds set up for federal awards are set up in interest bearing accounts. If at any point, the fund is in a surplus cash position, interest will be calculated per University policy and will be recorded on the 5 fund (object code 4780).

In the past, when the fund was closed, the ORS Accountant would manually transfer the interest out of the 5 fund and into the University’s designated liability account. Recently, an automatic process was introduced and all interest earned is transferred out during the same month in which it is earned (via object code 4783).

On an annual basis, this money is returned to Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Interest earned on federal funds can not be retained by the University.

For non-federal funds, the process has not changed. If a contract or award requires that interest be accrued on any surplus funds, it will be set up in an interest bearing fund. Depending on the terms of the agreement, the interest will be available for the department to spend towards the goals of the project or the interest will be remitted back to the sponsor. Please note that it is rare that a sponsor requires interest to be accrued. In either case, the interest will be utilized or returned according to the sponsor’s guidelines.

It is important that interest is handled according to the sponsor’s terms. If you have any questions regarding a particular award, please contact your ORS Accountant or Kerry Peluso, Post Award Director at pelusok@pobox.upenn.edu.
Frequently Asked Questions

When submitting a clinical trial to ORS, what must be submitted?

For the School of Medicine, these items should be submitted to ORSS which will forward them to ORS via the normal process. Outside of the SOM, these items must be directly submitted to ORS. The following information must be provided in addition to the transmittal form:

- Department contact and phone number
- Sponsor address, contact person and phone number
- Contract – two original sets for signature
- Study budget (cost per patient)
- Study protocol
- Patient consent form
- Conflict of Interest materials attached or e-submitted if “Yes’
- Copy of IRB approval or BEN report or copy of PI’s letter to IRB requesting approval

When submitting an Amendment to a Clinical Trial proposal changing the budget, the following information must be provided in additional to the transmittal form:

- Amendment two original sets for signature
- Summary of protocol
- Consent form (when appropriate)

If all of the information listed above is not provided, the proposal will not be approved/processed. The missing information will be noted and the missing items will be referred to the department for completion/correction. Therefore, the process of review and negotiation of the Clinical Trial/Amendment proposal will be delayed.

NIH is questioning the carryover amount from one budget period to the next. What information did ORS provide to them about the spending on this award?

NIH does not require nor accept annual financial reports (FSR’s) for individual budget periods for most NIH awards (training grants are one of the exceptions).

Almost all of the awards issued to Penn from NIH are paid via a letter of credit. This allows the University to draw down funds spent on NIH projects on a daily basis. The Department of Health and Human Services requires a quarterly report detailing the expenditures per award and the funds drawn down during the quarter.

This report is submitted as required to DHHS within 45 days following the end of each calendar quarter (3/31, 6/30, 9/30, 12/31). Expenditures reported for each award are those which are on the general ledger (BEN) as of those dates (unless the amount exceeds PBIL in which case PBIL will be reported since we can not report nor draw past the awarded amount).

If a carryover is anticipated to exceed 25%, NIH requires the PI to provide an explanation in the non-competing application. If it is not explained in this application, NIH will often question it later. It has come to our attention that the NIH is sometimes questioning PI’s when the carryover does not actually exceed 25%. It appears that NIH may be looking at an older quarterly report to determine the spending amount. Since NIH only has figures for four dates during the year, actual amounts spent as of the end of a budget period are generally not readily available to them.

In situations where these questions are received, the department should respond with the actual amounts as of the end date providing justification for any carryovers which exceed 25%. If you have any questions, please contact Kerry Peluso, Post Award Director at pelusok@pobox.upenn.edu.
Did You Know.......??

...If a principal investigator requests and receives a portion of their salary (e.g. 1/9 summer or 10% academic year) and then rebudgets that salary into other expenses s/he is still obligated to provide the equivalent percent of effort to the project. Principal Investigators may need to indicate this cost sharing amount in a University cost sharing account during the effort reporting period covering the period in question.

...The Cost Transfer Policy (Sponsored Projects Policy 2113) applies during the full life of the award (not just at the end of the award).

...It is the responsibility of the department to ensure that all 5 funds are ready to closeout by the end of the adjustment period (generally, but not always, 60 days). This includes ensuring that all expenses are appropriately reflected on the fund and that all overdrafts have been addressed. If overdrafts are not addressed by the Department by the end of the adjustment period, ORS will transfer the overdraft to the department’s 0 fund during the closeout process. Please see the Sponsored Projects Policy 2128 and Sponsored Projects Policy 2129 for more information.

Training Opportunities:

ORS Quizzes and FAQ’s:

Take a moment to look at our quizzes or FAQ section for more guidance on administering 5-funds here at Penn. Both can be accessed by clicking Training on our home page (http://www.upenn.edu/researchservices/).

Research Compliance Tutorials and Other Education:

For further guidance on administering 5-funds here at Penn, please visit the Research Compliance Training and Education page at http://www.upenn.edu/researchservices/rc/pages/training.htm.
ORS Monthly Quick Quiz

1) OMB Circular A110 mainly covers which –
   a) Cost Principles
   b) Administrative Requirements for Grants and Other Agreements
   c) Audits

   For answer, click here or visit http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/index-education.html.

2) Quizzes and Tutorials are now available for the subjects of Allowability, Cost Transfers and Documentation.
   a) True
   b) False

   For answer, click here or visit http://www.upenn.edu/researchservices/rc/pages/training.htm.

3) Cost sharing or matching refers to the specific portion of the project or program costs which are not funded by the sponsor.
   a) True
   b) False

   For answer, click here or visit http://www.upenn.edu/researchservices/CostSharing.html.

Penn ERS - Got Questions?
Visit our Website

The Penn ERS team has provided a variety of different documents full of information on Penn’s new effort reporting system. This will impact everyone who is responsible for administering personnel on research awards. More information is available on Penn ERS and effort reporting at http://www.upenn.edu/researchservices/effortreportingA.html.
Getting to Know......
Keith Dixon,
Assistant Director, Data Management

Years at Penn: 8 years
Years in Research Services: 8 years
What he does: “I bring sanity to an insane world.”
Hobbies/Interests: Watching movies, playing golf, studying the nuances of the universe....
Favorite Foods: Stuff with bacon on it.
Favorite ways to spend a vacation: One word --VEGAS!

What Co-workers say:
...Keith is dedicated, has a great work ethic and arguably has the best sense of humor in ORS. He is a key player and very knowledgeable in LOC reporting & data management.
...Keith is always willing to help and takes the time to explain the issues involved.
...Keith has a good sense of humor and can be counted on for a good laugh.
...Keith has the ability to make an otherwise dull meeting about important matters more interesting.

May’s Contributing Authors, ORS Newsletter:

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The Pre-award staff is responsible for processing proposals, reviewing, negotiating, and accepting awards (except for corporate contracts), as well as, providing post-award non-financial administration for these accounts. Questions concerning issues such as no-cost extensions, carryover requests and other administrative matters should be directed to the appropriate pre-award contact. Questions concerning industrial clinical trial agreements and sponsored research agreements should be addressed to the Corporate Contracts Group.

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- Orthopedic Surgery – SOM
- Pediatrics – SOM
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Contact Information for all areas is provided below.

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• Graduate School of Fine Arts
• School of Dental Medicine
• Wharton School
• Law School

• School of Engineering and Applied Science:
  - Electrical Engineering
  - Computer Science and Engineering
  - Institute for Research in the Cognitive Sciences
  - Systems Engineering

• School of Arts and Sciences:
  - Physics
  - School of Medicine Departments:
    - Genetics
    - Penn Muscle Institute
About Our Organization...

Our Mission

The Office of Research Services (ORS) oversees the administrative support of the University’s externally funded research and is responsible for implementation of University policies established for this purpose. An important part of the ORS mission is service to the research faculty, through the provision of information and advice for the development of applications, and assistance in the administration of awarded grants and contracts.

In this role, ORS

- Supports the schools and centers in the development of proposals for grants and contracts;
- Reviews and approves all proposals before submission to the potential sponsor;
- Coordinates negotiations of awards;
- Accepts awards for the University, including the signing of contracts;
- Provides oversight and guidance to faculty and staff concerning the proper management of sponsored projects;
- Prepares all financial reports to sponsors.

In addition to these functions, ORS is responsible for billing of contracts, management of letters of credit for payment of grants, preparation of the facilities & administrative and employee benefit rate proposals and rate negotiations, management of the effort reporting system, and oversight of service center rate development. ORS reports jointly to the Vice President for Finance & Treasurer and Vice Provost for Research.

Office of Research Services
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